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ABSTRACT

Crow people want their resource decisions to benefit and strengthen the tribe socially and economically and to minimize damage to the tribal way of life, culture, and reservation environment. Based on a survey of 1016 reservation and non-reservation Crow families, conducted as part of a study of the impact of resource development on the reservation, the Crow want to stabilize reservation economy by the establishment of local, tribal-owned and operated small businesses. Crow people want improved local school facilities and curricula and their own community college. Currently, only Crow who are college graduates are employed at a level commensurate with their education. There is only 60% employment on the reservation, most of it menial and mostly from the various public agencies. The median family income is $4,500 per year. Fifty-three percent of Crow people interviewed favor the development of agricultural resources, 17% favor recreational and tourist resources, 14% favor coal resources and .4%, energy plant construction. They feel coal development will change their personal and tribal way of life positively by providing more money and jobs and better housing and education, but also negatively, because a large influx of outsiders would bring over-population, loss of tribal reservation control, increased social problems, and possible environmental deterioration. (SB)

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A SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, AND CULTURAL STUDY OF THE CROW RESERVATION:

Implications For Energy Development

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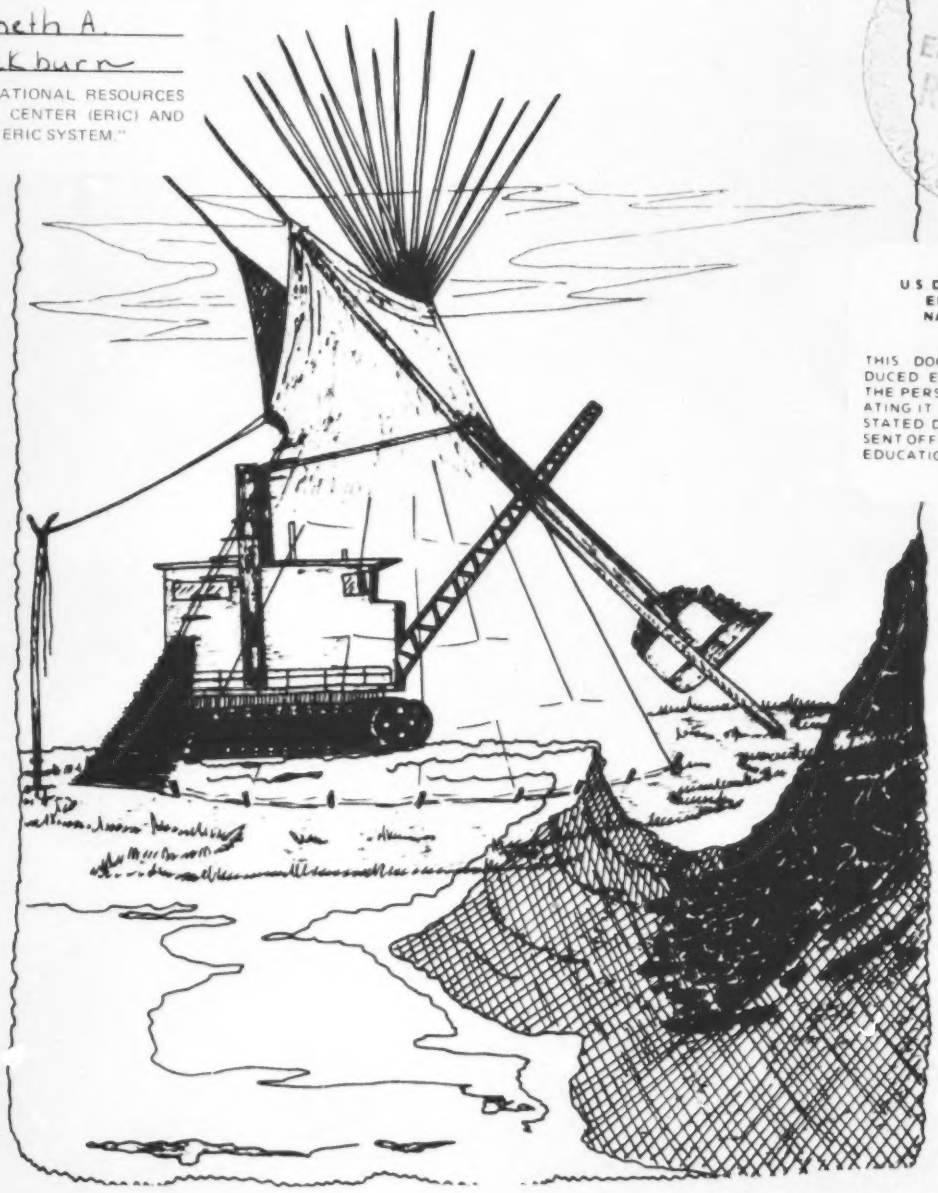

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A STUDY FOR OLD WEST REGIONAL COMMISSION

SUMMARY REPORT

RC 010994

CROW TRIBE

Crow Impact Study Office

A SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, AND CULTURAL STUDY OF THE CROW RESERVATION: IMPLICATIONS FOR ENERGY DEVELOPMENT

1977

Prepared By

Crow Impact Study Office

with the assistance of

Mountain West Research, Inc., Consultants

SUMMARY REPORT

INTRODUCTION

The Crow Tribe is currently facing some important and controversial decisions about its economic future. Due to the vast amounts of strippable coal (4.5 - 6.0 billion tons) in the eastern portion of the reservation, pressure has been placed on the tribe to develop these coal resources. Understandably, this has caused much turmoil within the tribe concerning whether or not to develop this resource and also about the amount of study necessary to understand the possible impacts of such development before making any decisions.

The necessity of a study of the impacts of resource development on the reservation has been present for some time. Therefore, in 1975 this study was initiated by the proposal to the Old West Regional Commission submitted by the Crow Tribe. The proposal requested funds from Old West for the preparation of baseline studies in the areas of economic, population, social, and cultural conditions on the Crow reservation.

During the latter part of 1976 and early part of 1977, a survey of the Crow Tribe was conducted with 1016 families on or near the reservation. Nearly 70% (950 families) of

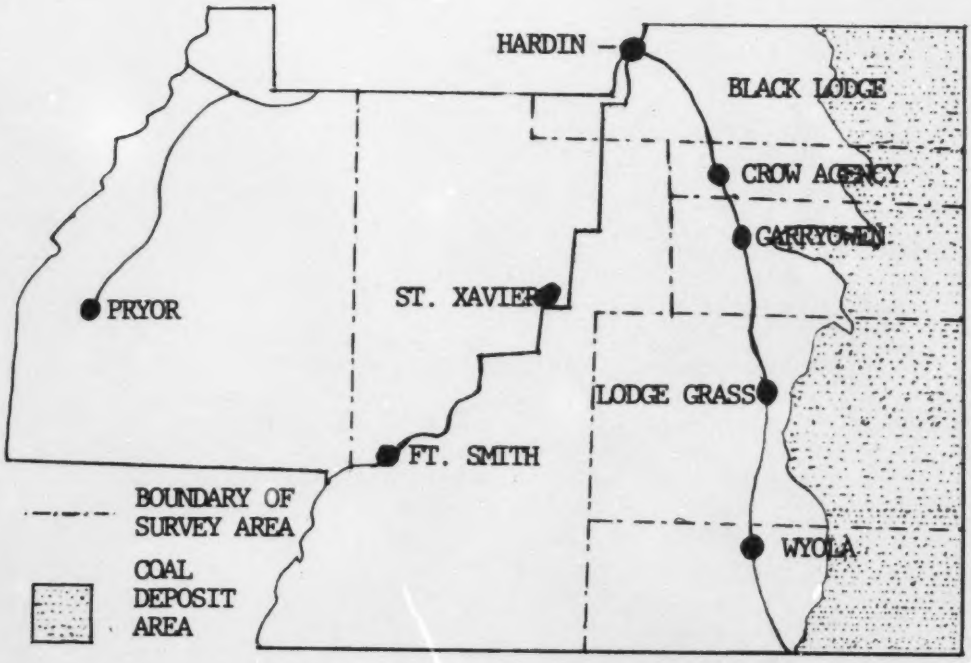
the 1359 Crow families on the reservation were interviewed, and 7% (66 families) of the 982 Crow families living off reservation were interviewed. (See Figure 1)

Figure 1. Percent of Crow family heads in each Reservation Survey Area who were interviewed.

Survey Areas	Percent of Crow Family Heads Interviewed (actual respondents)
	%
Black Lodge	96
Crow Agency	73
Garryowen	98
Lodge Grass	66
Pryor	58
St. Xavier-Fort Smith	81
Wyola	51
Hardin	59
Billings	22
Other (including out-of-state)	2
Total On-Reservation	70
Total Off-Reservation	7

The Crow Reservation was broken down into seven geographical areas for the survey: Lodge Grass, Black Lodge, Crow Agency, Garryowen, Pryor, St. Xavier-Fort Smith, and Wyola. The town of Hardin, which is directly adjacent to the reservation, was treated as a reservation survey area because many Crows living there participate in reservation activities. (See Figure 2)

FIGURE 2



BOUNDARIES OF SURVEY RESEARCH AREAS
AND LOCATION OF COAL DEPOSITS

Questions in the survey included household composition, population characteristics, employment and education characteristics, people's attitudes toward their culture, residential patterns, and people's feelings about resource development and its impacts, especially coal mining and conversion. Due to the great quantity of data collected, this report consists only of the information of most general interest from the survey. However, all data collected on this survey are available from the Crow Impact Study Office or from the Final Report.

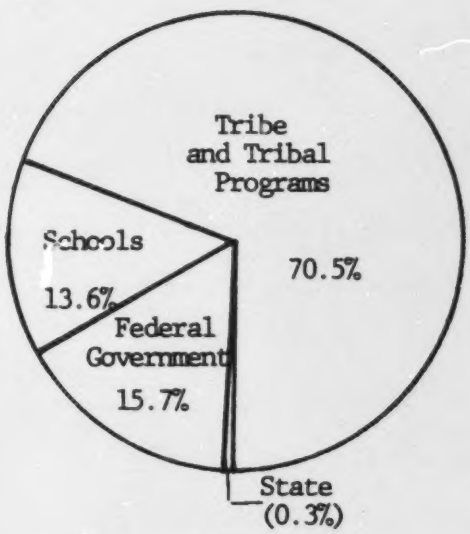
ECONOMY AND EDUCATION AS THEY NOW EXIST

Jobs, Wages, and Income

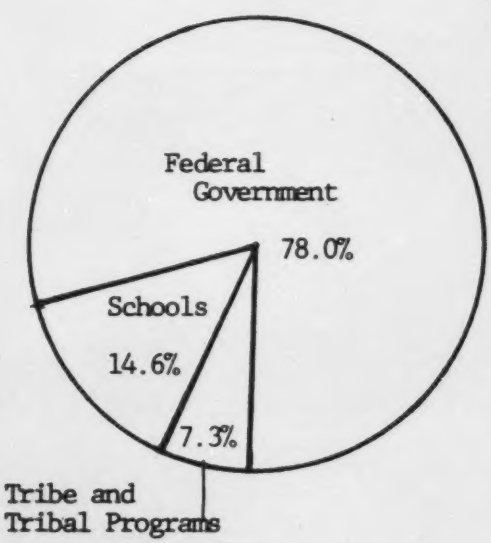
Many topics have been discussed in this report, but the one that seems to affect all others in both short and long-range importance is the reservation economy. The Crow economy, as it presently exists, depends largely on outside funding sources for employment. Almost 80% of all employment on the reservation is provided by the various public agencies, many of which are funded by federal, state, private, and other sources. Among the public agencies, the tribe and tribal programs are the biggest employer of Crow tribal members (see Figure 3). The remaining 20% of all employment on the reservation is provided by private enterprises and self-

FIGURE 3

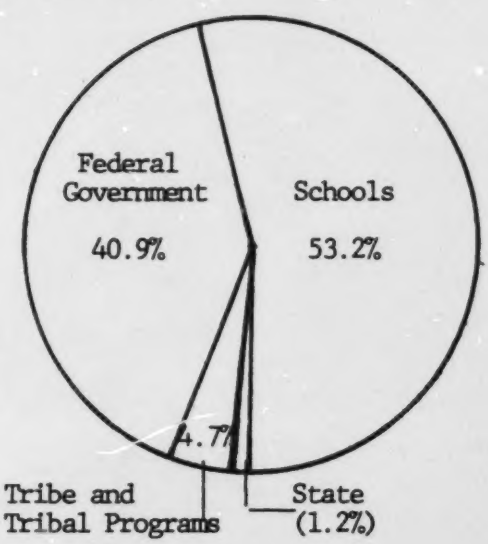
PUBLIC AGENCY JOBS ON THE CROW RESERVATION
HELD BY EACH ETHNIC GROUP



CROWS



OTHER INDIANS



NON-INDIANS

employment. All employers, however, provide jobs to less than 60% of the eligible Crow tribal members seeking work, resulting in an extremely high unemployment rate of over 40%.

Due to the characteristics of these main employers, job tenure on the reservation is short. This relates both to the fluctuation of funding received by these public agencies and to the job characteristics: seasonal, unidiversified, unskilled, and low paying. Typically, Crow tribal members hold laborer, clerical or service positions and to a lesser extent professional-technical positions. Many of these jobs are low-paying and require limited education in contrast to the educational achievements, which Crows, particularly younger Crows, have attained and the comparable pay levels which they should be receiving. The average wage received by Crow tribal members from all employment sources is $3.98 per hour as compared to $3.26 per hour paid on the average by public agency jobs. These average wages can be compared to the national average of $4.41 per hour.

Because of the problems of low wages and high unemployment, individual and family incomes are considerably below national figures. Crow median family income is $4,500 per year (from all income sources), while the U.S. figure is $13,720, over three times higher. In fact, almost one-fourth of all Crow families exist on a yearly total income of less

than $2,000. (See Figure 4) Most Crow families rely primarily on earned income rather than non-wage income. For example, the median earned annual income of the family heads who worked is $5152 (that is, half of all family heads earned less than $5152 a year and half earned more than this figure). This can be compared to the median lease payment of $783 per year for people who received lease income and to $958 median annual income from other non-wage sources for those people who received such income.

A comparison of incomes and jobs on the Crow Reservation among Crow Indians, other Indians, and non-Indians shows that other Indians and non-Indians typically hold more of the high paying jobs while Crow Indians are concentrated in clerical, laborer, and service work positions, with relatively low-paying wages. (See Figures 5 & 6) Between men and women, men tend to earn more in every occupational group than women. A comparison of average wages paid to men and women who work for the reservation public agencies is presented in the following chart:

Sex and Ethnic Group of Public Agency Employee	Average Hourly Wage
Crow women	$3.19
Crow men	$3.32
Other tribes, women	$4.56
Other tribes, men	$5.17
Non-Indian women	$5.87
Non-Indian men	$6.31

FIGURE 4

FAMILY INCOME:
CROW AND UNITED STATES POPULATIONS

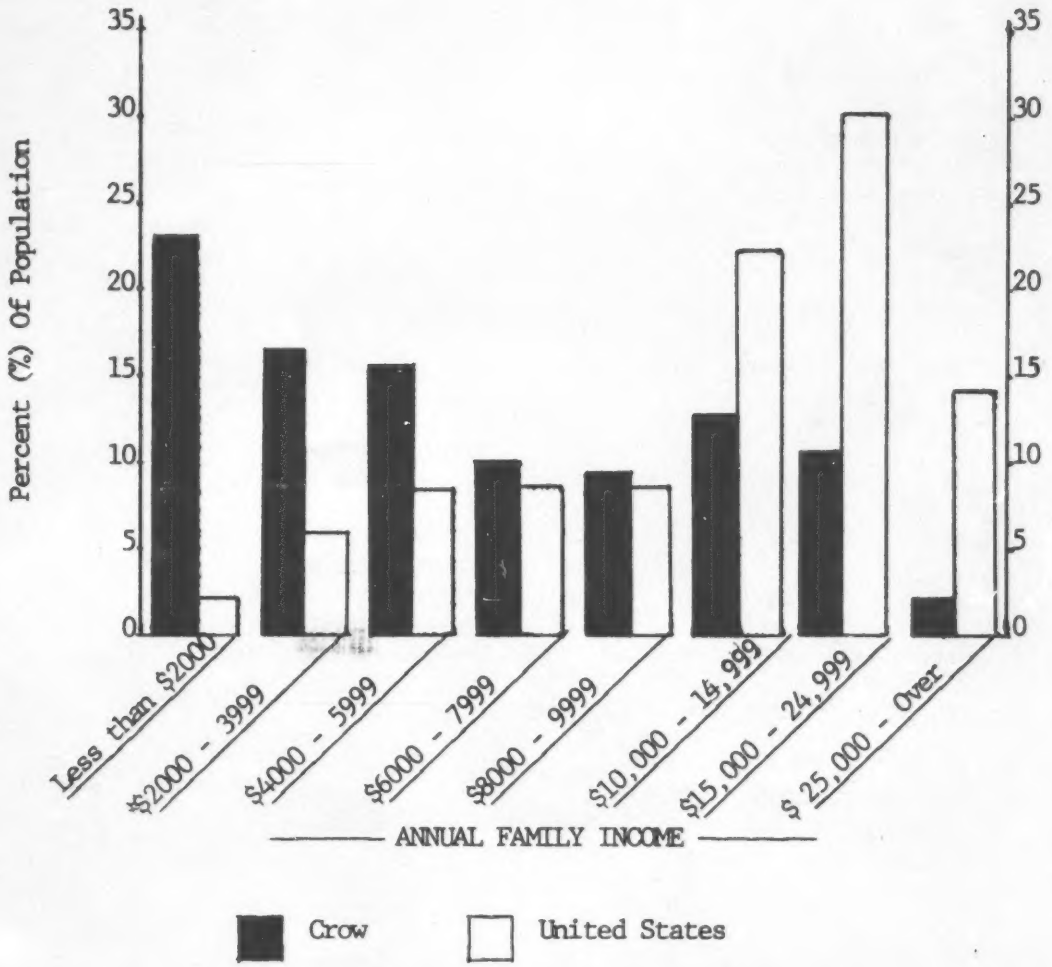


FIGURE 5

AVERAGE WAGES PAID TO
RESERVATION PUBLIC AGENCY EMPLOYEES BY OCCUPATION

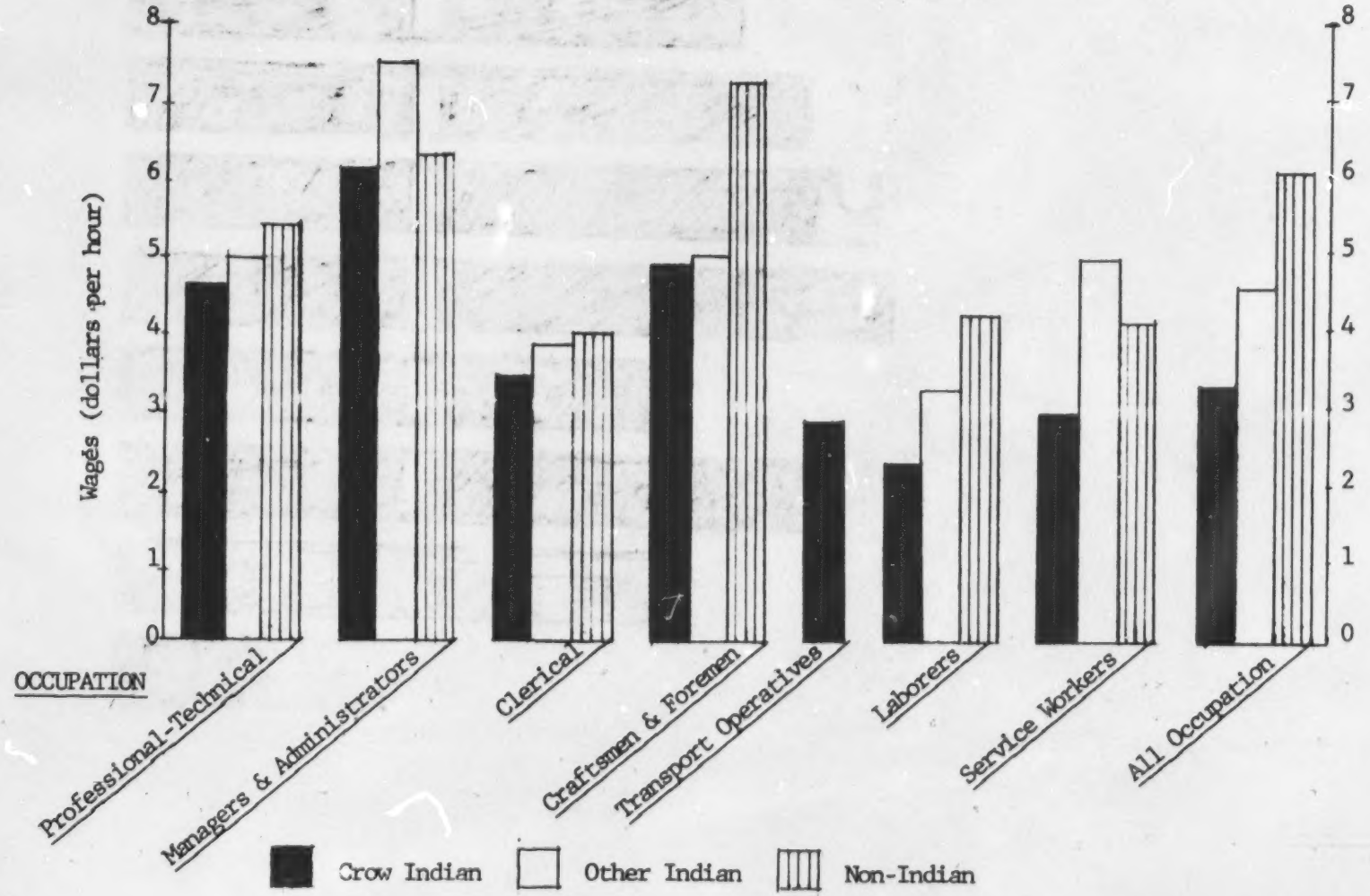
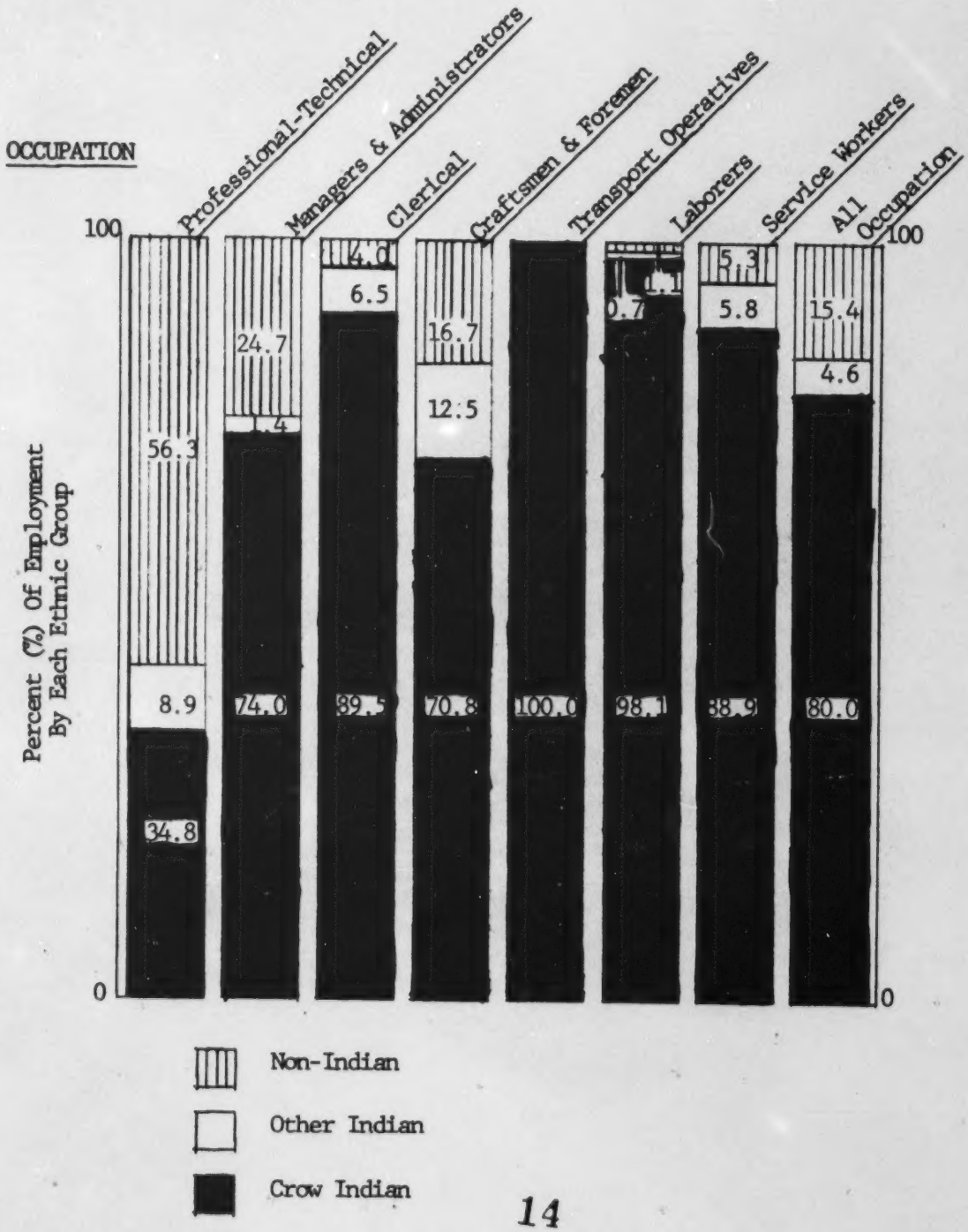


FIGURE 6

CROW AND NON-CROW EMPLOYMENT
IN RESERVATION PUBLIC AGENCIES BY OCCUPATION



Education

Over 30% of the employed Crows have some college education and yet only 18% hold jobs requiring higher education. Since many of the high paying and skilled or professional jobs existing on the reservation are held by non-Crows, qualified Crows must take jobs for which they are over-qualified. However, usually those Crows with four or more years of college get jobs and incomes which match their level of education. Often Crows who have had job training, either on-the-job or vocational, find themslves working in job areas which do not utilize their training. Therefore, it is often the case that Crow people do not get the job or income expected of their education or job training background. (See Figure 7)

The problems of unemployment and of matching people to jobs (based on their interest, education and training) are escalated by the youthfulness of the Crow Nation. Half of all Crows on the reservation are younger than 20 years old. (See Figure 8) It is also this younger generation who are completing higher levels of education. Therefore, this will subsequently increase not only the demand for jobs but also the desire that these jobs reflect the educational attainments of the Crow people of the future.

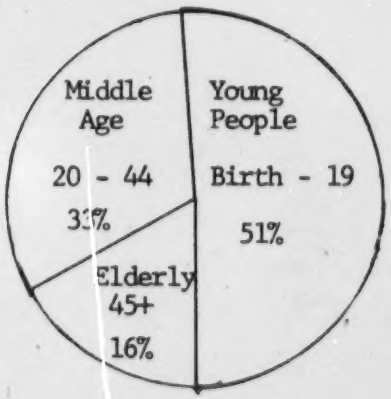
FIGURE 7

PERCENT OF EDUCATION BY EARNINGS

Earnings, 1975	High School Graduate Or G.E.D.	1-3 Years Of College	4 Or More Years Of College
	%	%	%
$0-2999	29	22	12
$3000-6999	34	33	20
$7000-8999	13	19	18
$9000-10,999	11	10	21
$11,000-12,999	4	8	11
$13,000-14,999	2	3	4
$15,000-Or More	7	5	14

FIGURE 8

AGE DISTRIBUTION: CROW SURVEY POPULATION

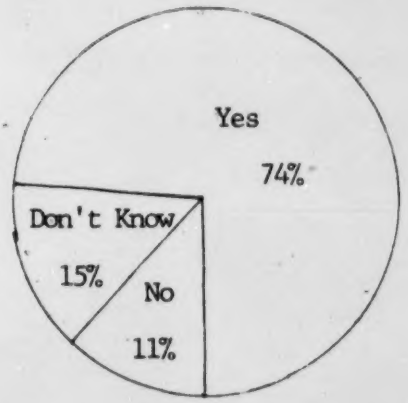


FUTURE EDUCATIONAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Educational Expectations

People's expectations of improved education and schools are a reflection of their hope that even greater numbers of young people will obtain higher education and training to use in the service of the tribe than exists at the present time. It is the hope of many Crows that the local school facilities will be upgraded and their curricula will provide a solid educational background to Crow students. When asked whether Crows should have their own community college which would include Crow economics, culture, and language, the response was strongly favorable: (See Figure 9)

Figure 9. Should Crows have their own Community College or not?



Tribal Businesses

In accord with the desire for improvements in the area of education there exists a desire to stabilize the reservation economy. One means of stabilizing the economy on the reservation is to increase the amount of internal dollar turn-over. Presently, Crow tribal members spend a large portion of their income off the reservation. Food is generally purchased in Hardin and other goods are generally purchased in Billings, which creates a large flow of income off the reservation. (See Figure 10) Because of this, many Crows recognize that tribal businesses on the reservation would benefit the economy by providing more jobs for Crows and retaining Crow income within the reservation for further financial benefits. For these sort of reasons, the survey shows that Crows support the establishment of local businesses which are owned and managed by the tribe. Most people favor the tribe setting up grocery and clothing stores and a laundromat and cafe. (See Figure 11)

What part would resource development play in improvement of education and stabilization of the economy on the Crow reservation? That question depends on many factors - what single resource or combination or resources should be developed, at what cost, and with how much information should a decision be made. Crow tribal members chose agricultural resources most often (53%), then recreational and

FIGURE 10

TOWNS IN WHICH MOST FAMILY SHOPPING IS DONE

Item and Town	Percent
Food:	
Hardin	48%
Billings	23
Lodge Grass	18
Sheridan	6
Crow Agency	4
Garryowen	1
Other (Off- Reservation)	1
Clothing:	
Billings	62%
Hardin	27
Sheridan	9
Lodge Grass	1
Other (Off-Reservation)	1
Large Appliances:	
Billings	58%
Hardin	30
Sheridan	6
Lodge Grass	5
Other (Off-Reservation)	1
Small Appliances:	
Billings	54%
Hardin	34
Sheridan	7
Lodge Grass	4
Other (Off-Reservation)	1
Auto and auto parts:	
Billings	51%
Hardin	42
Sheridan	6
Other (Off-Reservation)	1

FIGURE 10 (continued)

TOWNS IN WHICH MOST FAMILY SHOPPING IS DONE

Item and Town	Percent
Ranch and Farm Supplies:	
Billings	49%
Hardin	34
Sheridan	8
Lodge Grass	7
Other (Off-Reservation)	1
Other (On-Reservation)	1
Building Construction Supplies:	
Billings	51%
Hardin	37
Sheridan	5
Lodge Grass	2
Crow Agency	1
Other (Off-Reservation)	3
Other (On-Reservation)	1

FIGURE 11

WHICH BUSINESSES WOULD BE GOOD FOR THE TRIBE TO OPERATE?

Type of Business	Percent
Grocery	80%
Clothing Store	71
Laundromat	68
Cafe	59
Construction Material	50
Bank	45
Public Utilities	44
Credit Union	44
Auto Sales	42
Insurance	35
Implement Sales	32

tourist development (17%), coal resource development third (14%) and the construction of energy plant least frequently (0.4%). Even though so much emphasis has been placed on coal development, the Crow people didn't choose this as the reservation resource that they would most like to see developed.

However, since the main objective of this survey was to study the impacts of coal resource development, the remainder of this summary will deal with various aspects and considerations of coal development. According to the majority of the Crow tribal members, reservation coal development will change their own personal way of life and the way of life of the tribe as a whole. (See Figure 12 & 13)

Figure 12. Expected Changes in Personal Way of Life Brought by Coal Development.

Changes for Better		Changes for Worse	
More income, money	63%	Too Many non-Crows	35%
More Jobs	34%	Polluted Air	25%
Improved living conditions	7%	Disturb and disrupt land	20%
Economic improvement	5%	Crowding	14%
Modernization	4%	Minority on their own land	14%
Easier Life	4%	More Crime	14%
Better housing and Education	4%	Many wine drinkers	6%
Other	9%	Unsafe for Crow people	2%
		Endanger animal life	12%

Figure 13. Expected Changes in the Way of Life of Crow People as a Whole Brought by Coal Development.

Changes for Better		Changes for Worse	
More money, income	61%	Too many non-Crows	35%
More jobs	46%	More Crime	18%
Reservation will be industrialized	5%	Pollution	12%
Educational benefits	5%	Mixed marriages	11%
Economic improvement	4%	Destruction of land	9%
Better standard of living	4%	Loss of Crow lifestyle	9%
Better schools	4%	More drunks	8%
Better homes	4%	Increase population, crowding	7%
Other	11%	Money feuding	4%
		Extinction of Crow people	3%
		Loss of reservation	3%
		Loss of relationship	3%
		Laziness	3%
		Other	10%

The changes that the Crow people are hopeful for are improvements in the reservation economy, and upgrading of Crow education, schools, and housing. First and foremost, people expect coal development to bring in more money, income, and jobs to the Crow Nation. The reasons behind people's expectations of economic improvement are clear from the review of the present Crow economy. As for people's expectation of improvements in housing, this is an indication of their widespread dissatisfaction with the current reservation housing situation. The Crow people would like to see more comfortable and well built houses constructed to relieve the housing shortage and to upgrade the quality of existing homes.

Crow people are not certain, however, that the anticipated benefits of coal development will actually occur. They are also acutely aware of the many possible negative affects of coal development on the reservation. Of greatest concern to the Crow people is that a large influx of outsiders will occur, resulting in over-population, loss of control by the tribe over its reservation, and increased social problems (including an increase in crime and alcoholism). People also expressed a strong concern that environmental deterioration might result from reservation coal development. (See Figure 14)

Figure 14. Opinions of Crow Tribal Family Heads - Good and Bad changes Brought by Strip Mining.

Good Changes		Bad Changes	
More jobs	42%	More non-Indians and non-Crows	30%
More money	39%	Population increase	21%
More income	25%	Disruption of land	21%
Economic improvement	8%	Increase in crime	17%
Better housing	4%	Pollution	13%
Good education and schools	4%	Environmental impacts	9%
Resource development	3%	More drinking	5%
Better standard of living	2%	Inter-marriages	3%
Reclamation is good	2%	Non-Indians taking over	3%
Other	2%	Deterioration of reservation	2%
		Endangering animal life	2%
		Destruction of land and water	1%
		Other	9%

The Crow Nation is split over whether they should allow reservation land to be disturbed by strip mining. However, if mining occurs, most people believe the land should be restored to full agricultural and grazing use. Along these lines of thought, the possibility of a power plant received substantial opposition due to fears that construction would cause both environmental and social damage. (See Figures 15 & 16)

Figure 15. Should Reservation Land Be Disturbed or Disrupted for Coal Mining.

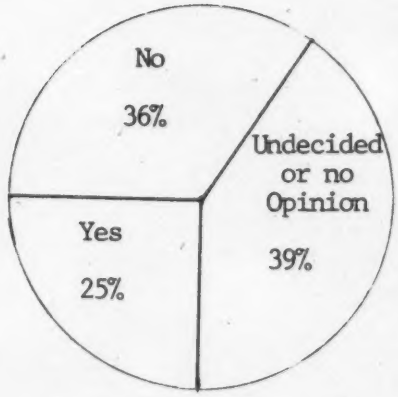
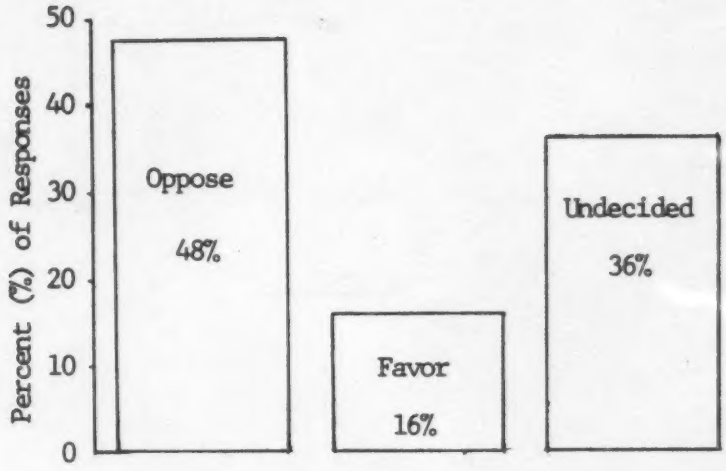


FIGURE 16

SHOULD A POWER PLANT BE BUILT ON RESERVATION



In summary, Crow people are concerned that their decisions on resource development will benefit and strengthen the tribe economically and socially and that damage to the Crow way of life, to the traditional culture and language, and to the reservation environment be avoided or minimized. The Crow Tribe has still to decide upon and take a final course of action on development of its coal and other reservation resources, however, for such important and controversial decisions further information is needed for an accurate and wise evaluation of the impacts of resource development.

FOOTNOTE:

All information in this report has been taken from the Final Report of the Crow Impact Study - A SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, AND CULTURAL STUDY OF THE CROW RESERVATION: IMPLICATIONS FOR ENERGY DEVELOPMENT